

ix months ago, Louisiana and the Gulf Coast were hit by the largest natural and manmade disasters in American history. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the levee breaches that followed devastated the region and dramatically changed our lives.

Today, six months later, our spirit remains strong; and we know, that just as our ancestors did before us, we will build our home again - right here on the Louisiana coast. As I said last fall, there are five essential and interconnected priorities to reopening our home: homes, schools, health care, economic opportunity, and the security of knowing it won't all be washed away again. During this season of Mardi Gras and the resurrection of spirit it ushers in, we reflect on how far we have come, and take stock of the tremendous work still ahead.

Restoring levees and building better protection systems...

- ★ 169 miles of levees were damaged by Hurricane Katrina. 125 miles have been repaired. More than 200 miles of Louisiana's coast are without hurricane protection levees.
- ★ 118 square miles of coastal wetlands were destroyed by the hurricanes, 5 times what Louisiana normally loses each year and an area twice the size of Washington, DC.

Rebuilding our homes...

- * 81,737 damaged roofs have been temporarily covered under FEMA's "Blue Roof" program.
- The I-10 Twin Spans fully reopened on January 3, 2006, eight days ahead of schedule.
- ★ 51 percent of New Orleans public transportation remains closed.
- ★ Electricity has been restored for 95 percent of Orleans Parish residents, and gas has been restored for 81 percent. However, only one out of three homes are using either power or gas.

Revitalizing our economy...

- ★ Since Hurricane Katrina, the Small Business Administration (SBA) has received **28,629 applications** for Business Disaster Loans. Thus far, **31 percent** of the applications have been approved, totaling **\$777.6 million**.
- ★ 50 percent of hotels in the New Orleans metropolitan area have fully reopened, and 15 percent of hotels in the region have partially reopened.

Reopening our schools...

- ★ More than 9,000 students have enrolled in Orleans Parish public schools, a school system of more than 65,000 students prior to Hurricane Katrina.
- * 33 percent of public schools in Plaquemines Parish, 15 percent of public schools in Orleans Parish, and 8 percent of public schools in St. Bernard Parish have reopened.
- ** 88 percent of students have returned to Tulane University, 81 percent to Loyola University, 76 percent to Xavier University, and 50 percent to Dillard University.

Standing up our health care...

- One third of the doctors for the New Orleans metropolitan area have returned.
- ♣ Prior to Hurricane Katrina, there were more than 5,000 available hospital beds in the New Orleans metropolitan area. Now, there are less than 2,000.

Progress is being made, but there is still a long road to recovery ahead. Together, we will rebuild better, stronger and more prosperous than before.